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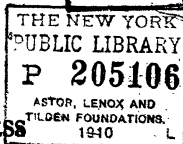
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**"HAST THOU KILLED,
AND ALSO TAKEN POSSESSION?"**

BY
CHARLES M. STURGES

AN UNSPOKEN ADDRESS

JULY 4, 1899



"And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." I. Kings, Chap. xxi, v. 15-19.

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"It is weakness, rather than wickedness, which makes men unfit to be trusted with unlimited power."

John Adams. (Works; Vol. 4, p. 406.)

"No * part of legislative rights can be exercised without regard to the general opinion of those who are to be governed. That general opinion is the vehicle and organ of legislative omnipotence. Without this, it may be a theory to entertain the mind, but it is nothing in the direction of affairs. * * If any ask me what a free government is, I answer that, for any practical purpose, it is what the people think so; and that they, and not I, are the natural, lawful, and competent judges of this matter."

Edmund Burke. (Works; Bohn's Ed., Vol. 2. pp. 27-29.)

"As the happiness of the people is the sole end of government, so the consent of the people is the only foundation of it, in reason, morality, and the natural fitness of things. And, therefore, every act of government, every exercise of sovereignty, against or without the consent of the people, is injustice, usurpation, and tyranny."

Proclamation of Council and Representatives of Colony of Massachusetts. (Works of John Adams; Vol. 1, p. 193.)

"I consider civil liberty, in a genuine, unadulterated sense, as the greatest of terrestrial blessings. I am convinced that the whole human race is entitled to it; and that it can be wrested from no part of them without the blackest and most aggravated guilt."

Alexander Hamilton. (Works. N. Y. 1850; Vol. 2, p. 125.)

"When any people are ruled by laws in framing which they have no part; that are to bind them, to all intents and purposes, without, in the same manner, binding the legislators themselves, they are, in the strictest sense, slaves; and the government, with respect to them, is despotic: * * because they are destitute of those checks and controls which constitute the moral security which is the very essence of civil liberty."

Same. (Vol. 2, p. 56.)

"Can it be true loyalty to any government, or true patriotism toward any country, to degrade their solemn councils into servile drawing rooms, to flatter their pride and passions, rather than to enlighten their reason, and to prevent them from being cautioned against violence, lest others should be encouraged to resistance? By such acquiescence great kings and mighty nations have been undone."

Edmund Burke. (Works; Vol. 2, p. 22.)

"HAST THOU KILLED, AND ALSO TAKEN POSSESSION?"

AN UNSPOKEN ADDRESS, JULY 4, 1899.

In the yet dark morning of its deliverance from a galling bondage, one of Liberty's newest born looked across the sea from its Philippines for pledges and succor to the chosen continent of freedom, belted across and flashing from nearer to farther ocean with all her signal-fires to the down-trodden and oppressed. To the doors of our capitol were borne the urgent petitions of that little one. With doubtful rhetoric, nor well at ease in the English tongue—old and unconquerable ally of liberty!—those utterances, if brokenly, yet mightily, pleaded to conscience and our past. They might almost have stirred in its slumbers the neighboring dust of Washington—almost have moved aright in its scabbard his ancient sword. We replied with contumely. Our councilors scorned and our press jeered. We answered with new hastening squadrons, for intimidation or slaughter.

If it were to be so, well hide those petitions, without sign, in the most secret strong-place of your capitol, and, if you may, set its time-lock for release after the day of judgment, that at its tremendous Sitzings, when before Him shall be gathered all nations, they escape not to testify against you: "Ye did it not to one of the least of these!"

Our chief men at war had looked upon the little outlying vineyard, and it was fair of promise "for a garden of herbs." Our religion had plausibly declaimed: "I will give thee for it a better vineyard." The queenly North-West, recreant to that ancient Ordinance of Liberties whereof she was born and greatly dowered, had whispered to her lord: "Dost thou now govern the kingdom?" Thereupon, with blood, we demanded the inheritance of their fathers.

"Thus saith the Lord, HAST THOU KILLED, AND ALSO TAKEN POSSESSION?"

Proudly bearing our Declaration of Independence, with all our other holy scriptures of liberty—under the shadowing glow of our uplifted flag, and in the presence of God, angels and men, and of the departed spirits of our fathers—we announce to a people hungering and by our examples in revolt for freedom:

"You, and your country, are ours—bought in at a price on war execution against your last master. These priceless teachings of liberty are too rich a cordial to agree with your constitution, or with our comfortable ownership. We will see that you partake of its great elixir in abstemious doses—out of our lesser United States spoon, long stained and odorous with like frugal administrations to our native subject races. Our representative Congress, which never saw you and knows neither your customs nor your speech, shall declare your fundamental laws in a foreign tongue, and write levies on your substance and earnings, and how they shall be expended. Its wise men maintain that, in the nature of things, your citizens cannot sustain to it those relations upon which depend even the humble remedy of the constituent by Petition. An elective President—for whom in no one of your thousand islands was ever ballot cast by one of their ten millions of inhabitants—shall equip your tribunals and appoint your overseers and task-masters. It is said that even now, with his advisers, he busies himself in pulling down irksome safeguards to purity in administration. At the end of each four years you shall compute new incoming with departing hordes.

"These gospels of independence are for the masters; for Anglo-Saxon blood; for white skins; for intrepid spirits willing, even with their women and little ones, highly to testify to them unyielding devotion with their utmost blood. No Tagal heart can rightly throb to them. They are not for you!"

Is this the residuum and deposit of a hundred and twenty-four Fourths of July, and was all the rest froth and fraud?

Having devised a bacterial and microbic liberty, to be progressively inoculated with attenuated virus, our engineers and artificers further construct complacent promises for humanity and good behavior—with performance and maturity at the option of the makers. With such bills of exchange in our newly expanded

Asiatic commerce we barter for men and independence. "Our priceless principles undergo no change under a tropical sun. They follow the flag." But hear it, thereupon, from behind the same mask smoothly declared that the CONSTITUTION, in whose sovereignty alone those principles securely abide and speak with final authority, expands not with the emblem folds of that flag, thus only consecrated, over the nation's possessions and people beyond intervening seas, there, also, with its supreme rebukes to protect and with its faithful benevolences to cherish and to comfort them. These are, instead, to "find that their cap of liberty is a soldier's helmet."

Have we laden our priceless principles, with shot, shell and powder, into our transports for alternative consumption by a people kindled for freedom by our home teachings? Ask the brown villager, lingering by the ashes of his cabin, beholding his desolated industries and the smoldering walls of his humble place of worship, rudely comforting his mangled living—whose "dim eyes to Liberty he turns"—and mourning for his dead,—ask him for faith in those principles which, convoyed by that flag, "running across the sea changed naught but sky" and remained capable of those things.

Sit, Cæsar, wearing imperial robes; sit, augurs of the faith of Him crucified; sit senators, patricians, high-born dames and gracious virgins; sit, my plainer countrymen, with wives and children, from homes blessed with "the peace of God";—safe sit, on this ancient holiday, in the secure places of the world-wide amphitheater, and with cheering acclaim hold your thumbs downward while Liberty, born of your fathers, thrust-at, sore-stricken and bleeding, stands faint upon the sands!

Is Independence at last slain—"yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?" Throughout our land, in the bewildering darkness of the tragedy, "one laughed in's sleep, and one cried 'Murder!'" Was no resemblance to our own father-freedom to stay guilty ambition's dagger-stroke? "What! will these hands ne'er be clean?"

The debate is idle as to who struck the first blow. We assaulted when, signing and sealing the great feoffment, with livery of seizin to us of ten millions of people, to have and to hold their birth-places, their homes and their future, we haggled at

writing one little word of independence on all the mighty scroll. Each gatling-gun hurried to the Philippines after war with Spain was ended "though silent already belched forth" all the slaughter it has since accomplished. Then standing in their homes, with arms in our hands, each ominous muteness as to our intentions was an uplifted blow.

Equally idle is the pretense that we have gone too far to stop—Satan's own maxim to his acolytes. "Let him that stole, steal no more." What nation was yet lost in a straight road? Having eaten in those islands a bloody lotos, in whose delirium and dreadful stupor we forget our country and the God of our forefathers, shall we no more awaken, nor "smite hoary Ocean with our oars in sorrowing return?"

Not fit to be free! It was always the plea of tyrants. No brutal heel but trampled down springing liberties with that utterance; no slave but toiled and wept at its bidding; no plantation lash but fell to its cadence. It was the sailing-directions for the slave-ship, and the chart to the Middle Passage.

A horticultural liberty—selected, clipped, potted, and dealt in to order, over the counter, by shopmen with an eye to profit! It is a spurious plant. Her tree does not so grow. Its seed imperishably awaits, from the beginning, soil and opportunity. When these have called, it answers "I am." That it has sprung up, is its voucher of legitimacy.

Independence is born of its own mighty travail, "with groanings that cannot be uttered." Its texts are: "With a great sum obtained I this freedom," and "These be they which came up out of great tribulation." It grows by its own responsibilities and its own endeavors. Its seers forever sing: "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." It is greatly nourished even by its own mistakes and excesses, and thereupon by its own bitter tears and atoning blood. Though its form be at first crude and misshapen, by such struggles it stands mighty at last in fulfilled sovereignty.

"Now half appeared
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane."

Liberty will never endure that her children shall be half slave and half free. Her mighty apostle declared a partial freedom to

save itself from injustice and oppression, is an object respectable in the eyes of God and man; but I cannot conceive any existence under heaven (which, in the depths of its wisdom, tolerates all sorts of things) that is more truly odious and disgusting, than an impotent, helpless creature, without civil wisdom or military skill, without a consciousness of any other qualification for power but his servility to it, bloated with pride and arrogance, calling for battles which he is not to fight, contending for a violent dominion which he can never exercise, and satisfied to be himself mean and miserable, in order to render others * * * wretched. If you and I find our talents not of the great and ruling kind, our conduct, at least, is conformable to our faculties. No man's life pays the forfeit of our rashness. No desolate widow weeps tears of blood over our ignorance."

Extracts from Address of Edmund Burke to his Constituents on the Contest for American Independence ("Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol"), April 3, 1777.